The Census Taker Is Abroad In the Land

By CHARLES N. LURIE.

"HOW many children have you?" says the man with the big blank book and the fountain pen.

"'Bout seventy-five," says the man who looks as though he knows all about subsoils and silos and crops.

"W-h-a-t!"

"Sure; there 're some of 'em," and the farmer's finger is pointed to a fine flock of chickens running about his barnyard.

"I said, 'How many CHILDREN have you?'" comes from the recovered questioner.

"Gosh! Thought you said 'chickens.' I've got five young ones, besides my daughter, who's married and lives over in the next township."

Dialogues similar to the one veraciously reported above—perhaps not exactly similar—are taking place all over the nation these fine April days, for the census taker is abroad in the land seeking whom he may enumerate. It is his business to ask questions, and it is the business of you and of me to tell him what he wants to know, for the law says that refusing to answer a census taker or giving him misleading or incorrect information is a misdemeanor, punishable by fine.

All to Be Put in Big Books.

The date of beginning the taking of the census was set several months ago for April 15. All the information about Uncle Sam's big family of nephews and nieces, including the colors of their hair, their conjugal condition and other intimate details, must reach the central office of the census bureau in Washington on or before June 20, 1910. Then a big force of clerks will get busy with the figures and the other information and tabulate them and compare them and compile them into shape for printing in the black volumes that are such interesting reading for those who find entertainment in such things and are so very dry for the rest of us.

Not long ago Uncle Joe Cannon was reported as saying, "This is a —— of a big country." It is, Uncle Joe; it is, indeed. Just how big it is in all ways it is the business of the director of the census to find out.

E. Dana Durand, the human eroteme—which is Greek for "question mark"—is the present director of the United States census. He says he will not take less than 90,000,000 as the figure for the country's present population. But then Mr. Durand is only a young man of thirty-eight, and he is naturally optimistic and hopeful.

He has a big job on his hands, and he knows it. Managing a force of 65,000 census enumerators and spending the sum of $13,000,000 for the purpose of finding out for Uncle Sam just where he is at is not an easy task to be approached in lightness of heart.

Some countries take an inventory of their possessions every five years. Among them are France and Germany. This country thinks a decennial census answers its purpose, the result being in the cases of some schedules that the nation has fairly outgrown the figures before they are announced to the waiting public.

No Censuses In Ancient Times.

The utility of the census is not, however, open to question. All nations in modern times have felt the need of knowing the number of their people as well as the extent of their possessions, and virtually every country now takes a census at intervals that are more or less regular. Ancient censuses were few and far between. The rulers of the old time world were too busy reducing the populations of their own and neighboring countries to care very much how many persons are left.

"We have changed all that," as the Frenchman says. Nowadays it is considered a matter of interest and moment for the government to know not only how many persons reside and do business within the borders of a country, but also in which businesses they are engaged and in what manner they carry on their affairs. The acres they devote to cultivation and how many are lying fallow, how many domestic animals add to man's wealth and comfort, his means of locomotion, his wealth, individual and collective—all these things and a myriad more are of interest to the statesman and the statistician directly and to the rest of us indirectly.

Farmer the Target of Many Queries.

As the farmer is the bulwark of our liberties, the mainstay of our industries and the supplier of the means whereby we live, naturally a great deal of census attention is devoted to him. Not alone to him and to his family, but to all matters of concern to him and to the rest of us, the census is extended. The agriculturist must tell the census man the total value of his farm, the value of the buildings thereon, of the improvements, including tools, machinery, etc.; the number and value of domestic animals, including cattle, horses, mules, asses and burros, swine, sheep, goats and poultry. Even the busy bee is not excepted, but of course Uncle Sam, being a merciful and reasonable man and remembering that this is the beginning of the farmer's busy season, does not expect him to count each bee separately. An accurate report of the number of swarms possessed will answer the purpose of the census. Crops and dairy products come in for the census man's attention, and forest products and the number of acres under irrigation are among the numerous other subjects on which information is demanded by Mr. Durand and his subordinates.

Like all the rest of us, the farmer must give details about the members of his family, their ages, sex, relationship to the head of the family, conjugal conditions, occupations, etc. It is reassuring to be told officially that "no inquiry is to be made regarding household or personal expenses or expenditures for repairs or improvements."

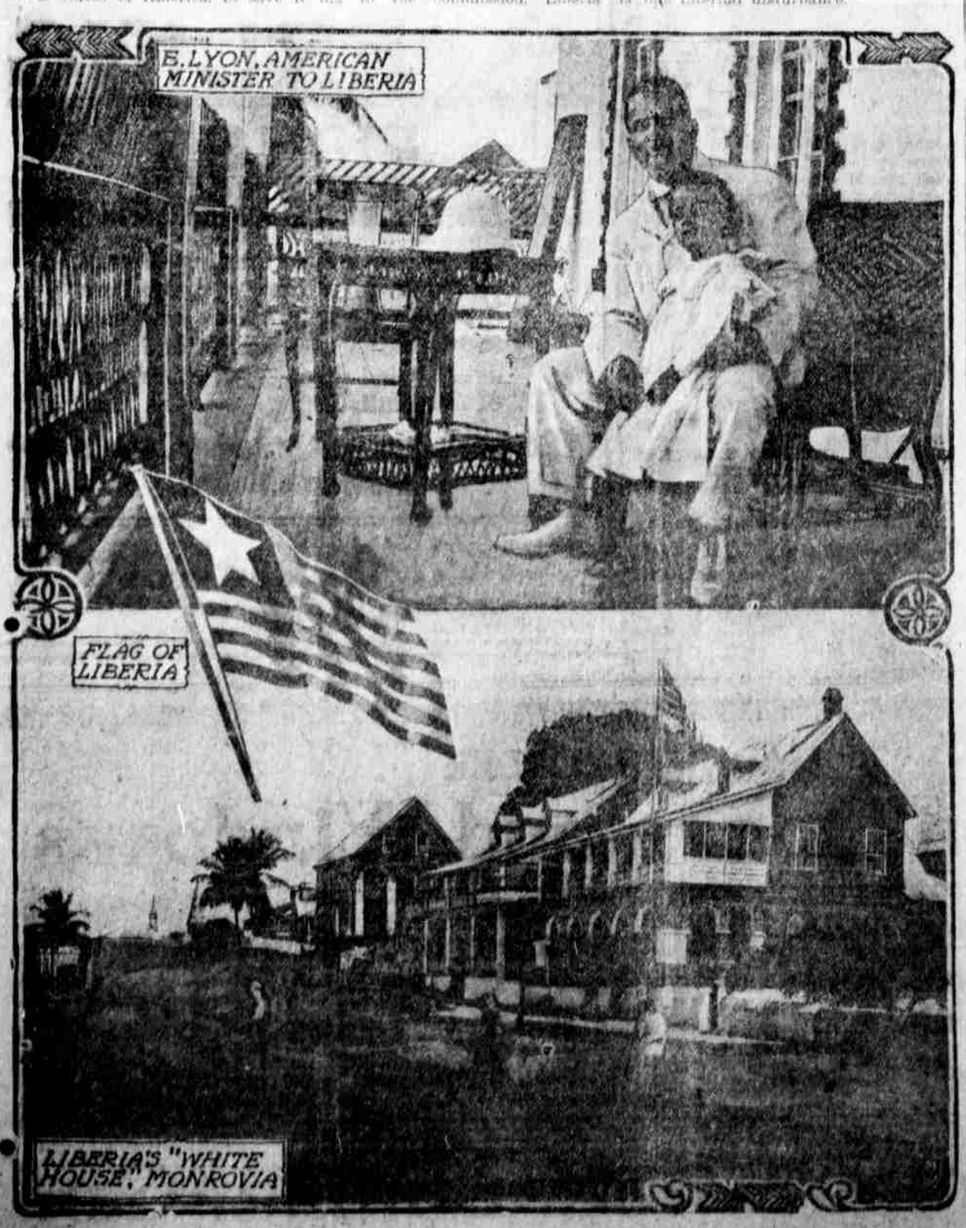
No Snap For the City Census Man.

Turn we now to the city dweller and the man whose duty it is to collect information about him. In many cases, especially if the task assigned to him takes him into the congested districts, he is finding out that he has not fallen upon a bed of roses or "easy money." Far from it. It is more likely to be the bottom of the flight of stairs on the outside of a tenement house, for some of the denizens of our big cities are very touchy, for obvious reasons, concerning what they term their "personal affairs."

It is not likely that mortality statistics among census takers will be included in the forthcoming reports, but it is here suggested that a special section be set apart for those young men who lay their lives upon the altar of their country's figures. City census taking is in many cases a job for a strong, healthy man, with the ability to beat a quick retreat and return, backed by the local police, if necessary. But men may come and men may go, and the census must be taken on Fifth avenue and the Bowery, in New York, as well as Michigan avenue and the region tributary to the Desplaines street station in Chicago. For the paltry sum of four or five dollars a day, the estimated earnings of the census enumerator in a big city, he must be prepared to risk life and limb. If he escapes with the former, however, he probably will have a store of interesting memories to last him at least until 1920, when the whole performance will be repeated.

Across Atlantic Comes Appeal For Aid

FROM far Liberia come a cry of distress and an appeal for aid. The negro republic is in grave peril or believes that it is, and it is asking its sponsor, the United States of America, to save it from political extinction. This view of Liberia's extremity is confirmed by the report of the American commission sent last year to investigate conditions on the west coast of Africa. According to the commission, Liberia is pressed upon one side by France and upon the other by Great Britain. There is also trouble with Germany. In addition to the external perils which encompass the country, there is serious internal disturbance.



It seems only fair and just for Liberia to look to the United States for assistance. The country owes its life and its continued existence to the present time to America, and we are in a measure responsible for it, although it has been an independent republic since July, 1847. Its people are largely descended from negroes who lived at one time in the United States, its official language is English, and its government is modeled after that of this country. Its capital is Monrovia.

The commission recommends that the United States extend its aid to Liberia in the prompt settlement of its pressing boundary disputes with Great Britain and France; that this government enable Liberia to refund its debt by assuming, as a guarantee for the payment of obligations under such an arrangement, the control and collection of Liberian customs. (This is the arrangement that has proved so successful in Santo Domingo, the West Indian republic.) The United States is asked also to aid in organizing and drilling a competent Liberian constabulary or frontier police, to establish and maintain a research station and to reopen the question of establishing a naval coaling station in Liberia.

Whatever may be the interest of our government in Liberia and the action it is taking in behalf of the little country, it is certain that the latter is now occupying little space in the minds of American negroes, for whom Liberia was established. The dream of its founders that it would prove a place of refuge for all the enslaved negroes of this country has not been realized, and there seems little likelihood of its realization.

For a decade or more Bishop Henry M. Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal church has been urging on his people the advisability of emigrating en masse to Liberia with their money and their household goods and establishing themselves there. In this connection the bishop has had much to say of injustice to the negro here, but his words have fallen on deaf ears, so far as encouragement of emigration to Liberia is concerned. The active movement of American negroes to Liberia ceased about twenty years ago.

The history of Liberia has been filled with vicissitudes since its foundation early in the nineteenth century, and several times the republic has seemed to be at the point of dissolution. In its early years it had to combat the hostility of the natives, the unhealthfulness of the climate, the difficulty of providing the means of life in a new country and other troubles. Dissensions among the colonists also arose to plague the early years of the Liberians, and the faint hearted returned with the agents of the National Colonization Society of America, which worked to send the first American negroes back to Africa, the home of their forefathers.

As has been stated, the government of Liberia is framed after that of the United States. There are a president, a vice president, a council of six ministers and a senate and a house of representatives. The present incumbent of the presidency is Arthur Barclay, an enlightened and intelligent negro.

J. M. CARR.

Heavyweights on New Rules Committee

"AND, of course, John Dalzell of Pennsylvania."

Pick up any newspaper published in the past twenty years that ran reports of the proceedings of the house of representatives, look over the lists of the men who supported Republican measures through thick and thin, and you are sure to find in it the remark which begins this article. Dalzell is a regular of the regulars. He is as regular as the return of Halley's comet, or the circus, or the earth's revolution, or any other fixed phenomenon. No matter which Republican leaders have been suspected of swerving ever so slightly from the straight path of machine Republicanism, it can never be said of Dalzell of Pennsylvania.

That leads us to another political characteristic of the man who has been chosen to head the new rules committee of the house. He is probably the most uncompromising or least compromising protectionist there is in congress or out of it. By an awful stretch of the imagination one can see Senator Aldrich or Representative Payne criticising the tariff, but never John Dalzell.

For a long time—so long that the legislative memory in Washington fails to run back to the contrary, save in the cases of some of the real old timers—Representative Dalzell has been one of the leaders of his party's members on the floor of the house of representatives. His relations with Speaker Cannon, whose place he has taken as chairman of the house committee on rules, have been particularly close.

To let Dalzell go with saying only that he is a very regular Republican and a thick and thin protectionist might be doing him an injustice. He is known in Pittsburg as a man of affairs and a shrewd lawyer, having practiced his profession in the city before he was elected to congress. He never held any other political office.

Of the other Republican members of the new committee there is not so much to be said, save that none of them has ever been accused of a leaning toward insurgency. They have been almost if not quite as regular as Dalzell. None of them has so long a service in the house to his credit as the Pennsylvania man, and none has borne so prominent a part in the proceedings. The five other Republican members of the committee are Walter I. Smith of Iowa, Henry S. Boutell of Illinois, George P. Lawrence of Massachusetts, J. Sloat Fassett of New York and Sylvester C. Smith of California. None of them comes near Dalzell's record of twelve continuous terms of service in the house save Boutell and Lawrence, who fall short of that mark by five terms each. The present term of Smith of Iowa is his sixth, while Fassett and the other Smith are serving their third terms. The Democratic members of the committee are Champ Clark, leader of the house Democrats, who hails from Missouri; Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama, Lincoln Dixon of Indiana and John J. Fitzgerald of New York. Clark and Underwood have served eight terms each, while Dixon and Fitzgerald trail along with three and six terms respectively. It will be seen, therefore, that among the members of the new rules committee there is no lack of experience.

"First Democrat of the United States" is Champ Clark's title among those who wish to dispute the leadership of William Jennings Bryan. They accord that title to the Missourian by virtue of his leadership of the Democrats in the house of representatives, but he himself has never voiced anything but loyalty to the Nebraskan.

CHAMP CLARK. JOHN DALZELL.

He is not the ranking Democrat of the house in point of length of service, being surpassed in that respect by a few others, but his succession to John Sharp Williams as leader of his party's representatives gave him the undisputed leadership.

It was Clark's skill as a debater that gave him the responsible and dignified post of leader of the minority. He is not exactly a bull in a china shop nor is he a Numidian lion when it comes to roaring, but if you tone down somewhat the characteristics of these two animals and then try to imagine them in the person of a big, burly man with a strong, rugged face you will have a faint idea of Clark. He is not a fancy debater by any means. He relies rather upon his wide and comprehensive knowledge of facts and his command of language to crush his opponent. When Clark gets through with the man who has had the temerity to face him there is little left to be done but to carry out the remains. He is deliberate, careful and earnest and seldom permits his temper to get the best of him. When he does, however, there is an explosion that shakes the house.

An encounter with Mr. Boutell, one of his colleagues on the new rules committee, is recalled by those who follow the house debates. Boutell had the temerity to interrupt one of Clark's speeches with an ironical remark. The Democratic leader advanced toward his opponent, his mouth and chin set in that hard cast which Republican and Democratic foes alike have learned to fear. "Keep your mouth shut," he roared at Boutell. "You have more mouth and less brains than any other man who ever sat in the American congress." And at that Boutell subsided.

ROBERT DONNELL.